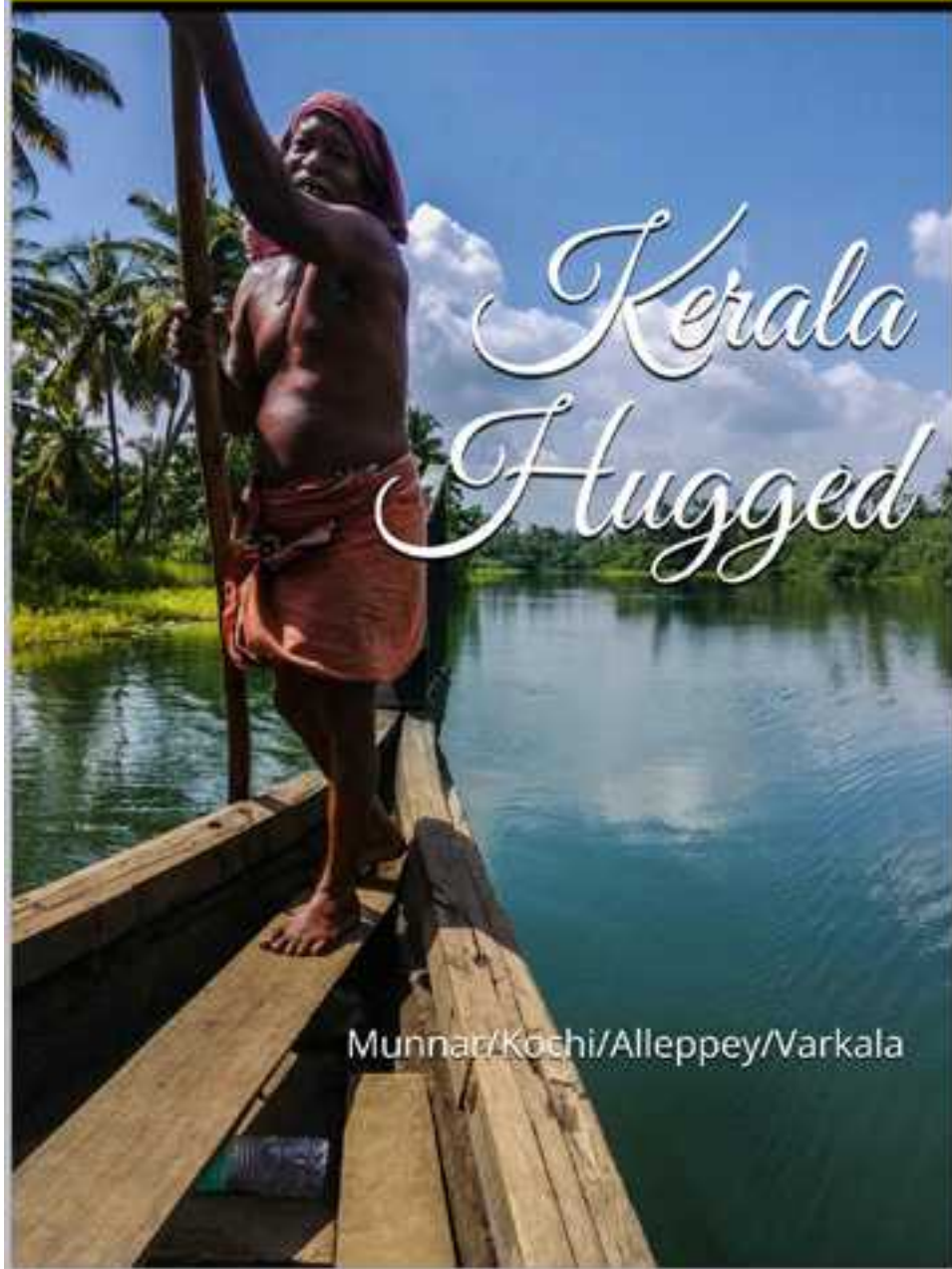


Ankur Mutreja



Munnar/Kochi/Alleppey/Varkala

KERALA HUGGED

Munnar/Kochi/Alleppey/Varkala

(Visit the book page at

<http://ankurmutreja.com/kerala-hugged/>)

-Ankur Mutreja

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Editorial Review

Completed on: 12/09/2016 (9th December, 2016)

Review Rating: 5 stars!

Reviewed By Mamta Madhavan for **Readers' Favorite**

Kerala Hugged: Munnar/Kochi/Alleppey/Varkala by Ankur Mutreja is a travelogue that takes readers on an interesting trip to Kochi, Alleppey, Munnar, and Varkala in Kerala along with the author and lets them discover the natural beauty of this place, which lies at the southernmost tip of India. The book captures the sights and sounds of each location, the places of interest there, and the author's memories as a tourist that made the trip memorable. The author's description of the places and his memories will make any reader want to pack their bags, take a trip to Kerala, and experience the abundance of natural beauty that has given it the title 'God's Own Country.'

The author speaks about the places in detail, and the color pictures shared in the book make his descriptions vivid and real and help readers connect well with the places and his words. Be it the hills of Munnar, the houseboat and backwater experience at Alleppey, the beaches of Varkala, or the crowded lanes of Fort Kochi, and the other tourist attractions, the author speaks about the diversity of the place extensively. For all those planning a trip to Kerala, this book is perfect as it will help them in deciding what to see, which places to visit, and what to expect while traveling in Kerala.

I enjoyed the book immensely as it is honest, and the author's writing style is simple and neat, making it easy for readers to understand. On the whole the book is an excellent travelogue and it brings alive the beauty of the places effectively.

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About the Author



Ankur Mutreja is a writer by choice and an advocate by profession, which choice he exercises best while writing on travel. Though he has been writing on travel in piecemeal manner, this book is his first travelogue. He has also been writing on other varied topics for last more than a decade through his blogs, which are accessible from his website. In 2015, he converted his blogs into a

book entitled "[Writings @ Ankur Mutreja](#)" and derived three other titles from it: "Sparks: Satire and Reviews", "[Flare: Opinions \(Law, Human Rights and Politics\)](#)", and "[Light: Philosophy](#)". He has also published a short book of poems entitled "[Nine Poems](#)" in the same year. His main areas of interest in the writing arena are Travel, Reviews, Satire, Poems, Opinions and Philosophy. Of course, other than these, he does lots of legal writing too.

Other than writing and travel, Ankur likes books, music, news, internet, and jogging, and recently he has rekindled his love for biking. Ankur doesn't open up easily, but on peeling a few difficult layers, he may turn out to be a sweet, soft pulp -- it depends entirely on you; he just reflects. Try your luck at:

Email: ankur.mutreja@gmail.com

Website: ankurmutreja.com/

Twitter: twitter.com/ankur_mutreja

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mutreja.ankur

Google: plus.google.com/+ankurmutreja

LinkedIn: in.linkedin.com/in/ankurmutreja

Prologue

In a borderless world, all would be travelers indeed. India is a small borderless world in itself, and Kerala lies at the southernmost tip. I live almost near the lovely Kashmir, but does that make Kerala any less lovely! This book is indeed my baby born out of my love of nature.

Writing books is the closest men ever came to having children

--Norman Mailer

Kerala is beautiful not only because of "God" but also because of the people who have made Kerala their home. I went there as a parasite in the disguise of a tourist and sucked all I could in a short span of 23 days. But did anybody ever complain? No, never. I think they believe the joy multiplies by sharing, and hereby I emulate them.

It started reluctantly in the midst of court appearances in Delhi courts in a busy September. Don't know how and when I boarded the Kerala Express, which left me in Kochi to enliven my life forever. Kochi is the place to discover yourself, your life and the world beautiful around you. How? Discover inside.

I, having been discovered, headed to Alleppey. Not to relax in the luxury of backwaters but to learn how they keep it so beautiful. Of course, I had to merge into them to discover their world. Snake boat races epitomize the best of their lives, so very different from that of ours own. You can learn it only if you become part of it. I did try my luck. Did I succeed? Discover inside.

Can you fall in love at 40? Yes for sure if you are in Munnar. The one I fell in love with was very special. Who was she? Was she a sexy Keralan? a pretty French? a bold German? a speedy American? a frank Britisher? a thinking Russian? a cute Chinese? a shy Pakistani? or, all of them merged into one? What happened to our love story? Do we meet even now? Or were there heart breaks? Discover inside.

Who says it is necessary to work to live? Definitely not if you are in Varkala! You can relax, think, observe, do no work, yet live a life. And it's so very simple! The nature itself helps you in it. How exactly? Well... discover inside.

Munnar: Love

Love at First Sight

Generally, wherever I travel, I enquire about the property prices. I didn't do it in Munnar, and how much I repent it! Who knows I might be having the wherewithal to own a little part of that heaven called Munnar. Unfortunately, for that little mistake, I will have to just admire that beauty, not own it. On second thoughts, nobody has ever owned that beauty: Britishers, Tata or tourists like me. The tea planters, the tea workers, the tea exporters, *et al*, have all merged into a cohesive one and are protecting and enhancing the beauty with sincere admiration. And what a job they have done! Munnar is the beauty incarnated, and she was indeed playful:

I hardly started to admire her that she draped herself in clouds.

Playful she was, but shy she wasn't.

Announcing love, the clouds receded, and she smiled in jest.

Alas! I only gazed her. Too pretty to be near! Too alluring to be far!



Munnar sight seeing is guided by various viewpoints; Lockhart Gap Viewpoint, Top Station Viewpoint, Photo Point, Echo Point, Shooting Point, Pothamedu Viewpoint, etc., but these are helpful only for

those who are blinded to beauty. In Munnar, wherever you stand is a viewpoint. If you are lucky, you book your hotel away from the town in the laps of the beauty; i.e, Chinnakanal, Devikulam, Suryanelli, Poopada, Yellapetty, Anachal, Pothamedu, etc. If you are luckier, you hire a bike for sight seeing and mark your viewpoints on the way. And if you are the luckiest, you also take your bike to far flung places like Thekkady, Wayanad, Ooty, Kodaikanal, etc.

(Well...I fall in the last category; yes, the luckiest! I booked my hotel in Suryanelli, 22 km away from the town in the midst of tea gardens. I rented a bike and was able to convince them to let me ride the bike not only in and around Munnar but also to Thekkady and back.)

Though the viewpoints were more or less superfluous, but the distances weren't. Top Station Viewpoint, as the name suggest, is located at a great height and is so to help people get the best view of the hills. But what interested me the most was the downhill slope from Top Station to Kundala Dam. The road was surrounded by tea gardens on both sides, and a very pleasant breeze flew all throughout without differentiating between the beautiful gardens and the ugly petrol/diesel vehicles. Luckily for me, my bike had touched reserve, and I decided to ride the slope with the breeze sans petrol, and what an experience it was. It felt as if it was not a ride but a flight in the laps of the nature, with a little cuddle here and a little cuddle there in between the delicate tosses from one lap to another. You can experience this anywhere and everywhere in Munnar with a little sensitivity, and which I indeed did throughout my stay in Munnar.

Just a caveat: don't try it at night because not just you but your bike also enjoys these cuddles and turns its eyes off sans petrol, which, instead of tossing between laps, can actually bump you off the road, and that can indeed be very risky on hills -- it did happen to me; I jumped off the bike; only miraculously she halted in screech, and how I ashamed I felt on abandoning her, with whom I would soon fall in love.

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at 104 degree centigrade after a wait of 40 minutes. Then the finest granules are collected in big bags in a tedious process, are separated into various categories, are packed, and are then sold in the market, including the one existing just next to the shop floor selling everything two for the price of one. And if you are still not asleep, have a nice sip at the vending machine. Enjoy your tea! After that we will go on a long drive.

Dating the Gorgeous

By now, I had already fallen in love with the bike too. When I went to return her, I made all excuses but the truth that I have fallen in love – had I disclosed it, probably, it would have been easier. They were very protective about her. They wanted to protect her from the prying eyes of the police, wild animals, unscrupulous mechanics, *et al*. I assured them of my capability to protect her from the world. In fact, I always carry my fitness certificates along, which I promptly presented to them in drills comprising 100 push-ups, 100 pull-ups, 200 sit-ups, and a 21 km half marathon. So assured, they finally allowed me to take her into the jungles of Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady. Actually, their concerns were not unfounded. The business works with the help and connivance of the police, and they had no access to the police in Thekkady, which was a different police station. Moreover, Thekkady is next to Tamil Nadu, where lechery/corruption is more widespread.

The trip started on the known paths, for I have been tracking 20 km of it everyday in my trip to and fro to my hotel. There were 90 km more of it, out of which 15 km till Poopada were dreamlike. I was residing so near to this unexplored part of heaven and didn't even know about it. These 15 km were mostly downhill, which I covered in no less than 2 hrs because I had already learned the art of getting tossed around in the laps of nature, and there was no way I was going to miss this opportunity. Indeed, I

switched off the engine and let the hill breeze guide the navigation of my bike. In Kerala, cows are killed for food; so, they have turned rebels. They

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pro for the shutterbugs and was pretty photogenic too. But try clicking a selfie, and the star would give you a tight kick on the bum. This star definitely knew her value, and so did the management of the park. They would not allow any private vehicle inside the park, and the minibuses they ran for the guests were forever occupied. The first time I visited the park there was a waiting queue of 3 hrs to board the bus. Then I learned there was also a possibility of getting an advanced reservation done to meet the reclusive star. Of course, I paid up and fixed an advance appointment, and it was worth the efforts. This was the prettiest star I have seen in the flesh.



Indeed, I did find some of my solace back in that ever beautiful Munnar, but it was time to leave. Even Munnar didn't want me to leave;

therefore, she sent the designated bus to Ernakulam an hour too early (or, blind in love, I noted the time wrong), and there was also the farewell with the bike. In any case, I missed my bus, which gave me another hour with Munnar, but I had to leave after all. Yes, I do meet her in dreams, but the love affair came to an end. Did it rain? I think it did!

Kochi: Enliven

Fort Kochi

I started my Kerala trip from Fort Kochi, and had I not accidentally read about the snake boat races while generally surfing the Internet, I might have stayed there forever. So, it is extremely important to surf internet in Fort Kochi. That's the only way to keep in touch with the real world in a fantasy world where pleasure appears faster than time, and you are left with no choice but to extend time, forever. The place is magical without any trace of trickery. No body cheats; all speak politely; the narrow streets have no stain of dirt; the home made chocolates exude pleasant smell; the beach breeze compliments jogging; the Kathakali centers induce musical evenings; the books invite a reading; the spice market open up nostrils; the Basilica challenges atheism; the museums enhance knowledge. Oh! So this was witchery to make me lose grip on reality. No, you need to surf internet incessantly in Fort Kochi.

Though the gifts were many, but I will have to specially thank Fort Kochi for gifting me a morning rhythm. I like jogging, but thanks to the pollution in Delhi, I have almost stopped it. But the morning breeze at Fort Kochi Beach naturally helps you shed lethargy. All you have to do is just wake up and smell the beach; the rest will be taken care of by the nature itself. I jogged in Fort Kochi on each of the eight mornings I spent there, and that helped me get into the morning rhythm, which continued throughout my stay in Kerala. There was lots of Indian Navy presence in the area in and around Beach Road: the Southern Naval Command of Indian Navy is situated in Kochi. The young cadets also jogged every morning at Beach Road. Jogging alongside the young cadets did make me believe myself younger, and the euphoria continues. Was that just the magic of the place? Or, have I really become younger? I chose to live with the second.

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Paani Paani Re... Reality can't be so beautiful! It must have been a dream only.



Kerala History Museum

Museums are a plenty in Kochi. Most of them are situated in and around Fort Kochi. However, the one I am interested in discussing is the Kerala History Museum located in Edapally, Kochi. The location *per se* is not very convenient for tourists; therefore, the museum deserves a little bias in its favor, for it is susceptible to neglect (call it affirmative action, if you wish). Actually, it is not just a history museum but a history and art complex comprising a history museum, a doll museum, a centre for visual arts, a gallery of miniatures, and a gallery of painting and sculptures. The ambience of the place is very relaxed, and the officers-on-duty, very co-operative.

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Let me say the experience in the gallery was incomparable. I am no art connoisseur, but I can stand spell bound when I see a beauty, and I just couldn't move in the gallery at few places – had I not taken those photographs, I would have been sculpted then and there; so, the little misdemeanor was necessary. The curator has chosen the paintings with a great taste: paintings have been selected from the Progressive Artists Group (M. F. Hussain, S. Chauda, Kishen Khanna, *et al*), the Matured Bengal School (Abanindranath Tagore, Nandlal Bose, Gemini Roy, Somnath Hore, *et al*), the Company School (Ravi Varma, Rama Verma, *et al*), Abstract Art (Ramkumar, Manu Parekh, G. R. Santosh, Kaladharan, *et al*), etc.

Everyone is acquainted with the name M. F. Hussain, but not many may know that he chose a radical mode of art that negated the accepted

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However, before hitting Kochi proper, I scooted on a highway from Bolgatty Island to Ernakulam. The ride on the highway was very, very smooth. There were lots of LMVs on the road but not many HCVs, which made the ride even smoother. I covered the distance of around 10 km in less than 10 mins. There were hardly any road breaks, and I don't remember crossing any traffic signals either. In fact, I was so overwhelmed that I ended up overfilling the petrol tank on the way.

But once I reached the city, the traffic took over the speed, and I couldn't ride smooth any longer. I returned the scooter next day with overfilled tank with a hope that the next rider would ride the scooter on highways, not streets. But, of course, the rental agencies remove excess petrol before renting out the vehicles. If there were any way to mark my petrol, I would have marked it for highways only, and if all were to do similarly, bicycle would become the mode of choice on city streets. Any

innovator reading this book: please find some way to mark the petrol for highways only.

Kalaripayattu

Kalaripayattu is the martial arts form of Kerala, which in its extreme form is said to be the genesis of Kung Fu. It was practiced by the warriors, who were indeed very busy in Kerala given its history of acquisitions and forced surrenders. Nevertheless, now it has been relegated to a less preferred art, which becomes apparent from the fact that the shows are organized along with Kathakali in the same compound, and the PROs are always interested in selling Kathakali over Kalaripayattu. I, however, chose it over Kathakali and was indeed in a clear minority, before, during, and after the show. In fact, I was the only audience in the show featuring three artists/warriors. But the artists didn't show any disinterest and presented their skills as if they were entertaining the Madison Square audience, albeit sans the 56" chest.

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manager was committed to a backpacker from France, with whom he was about to get married, and the trend seems to have caught up with all his friends. Another of his friend had already married a German girl and was about to migrate, and yet another was relentlessly wooing another German girl boarding in the same home stay.

I had a small chat with the girl, who seemed to be indifferent to commitment and was ready to mingle but not just with anybody, for she was pretty attractive and smart. The guy pursuing her was also pretty fit with a martial arts background. Incidentally, he was a Muslim, for which religion she seemed to be having hatred, but she did accompany him to an early morning Eid party. Is this Libido Drain or Love Jihad? Whatever, it

seems to be lots of hard work: the girl was not interested in me at least, or as it seemed.

The Ferry Service

One of the high points of the place was the ferry service which linked Fort Kochi, Matancherry, Willingdon Island and Vypin Island to Ernakulam and traversed the whole stretch of Vembanad Lake sandwiched between the five places. A portion of this part of the lake is also a port, wherein through a narrow entry from Laccadive Sea, the ships comfortably dock in the backwaters at Willingdon Island. The Willingdon Island is therefore also the industrial hub of the city. The ferry service runs from Ernakulam to Vypin Island, to Matancherry, and to Fort Kochi. The routes are a bit confusing: the ferry going to Matancherry always halts at Fort Kochi but only sometimes at Willingdon Island; and the ferry going to Vypin Island halts at Fort Kochi on Sundays, Saturdays and holidays, but not always. Nevertheless, any of these ferry services covers most of the stretch of Vembanad Lake therein, which is also what is covered by the commercial luxury cruises operating therein.

The service was pretty nice, and I had almost become fan of it but for a Sunday when I waited for an hour in the queue to board the ferry from Fort Kochi to Ernakulam, alighting at Willingdon Island. This was because the sale of tickets would suddenly stop and start only five minutes before the departure of the next ferry. I have not seen a system more stupid. It seems the bureaucracy there was devoid of commonsense. Or is it that some vested interests of the commercial cruises were getting represented over the interest of the poor boarding the ferry? The poor, who stop complaining right at the birth itself when they find however much they suck, they don't find any milk in the mother's breast. Nevertheless, I made an email complaint to the authorities (including the CM) with a threat of going public. Nobody has responded; therefore, I am reproducing the contents of the email here-in-below:

CONTENTS OMMITTED

-- I became fan of banana chips, which are better tasting than potato chips and, of course, much healthier.

After shopping, I headed back to Marine Drive, which is a nice place to spend evenings after a tiring shopping spree. You just sit on one of the benches and watch the vast stretch of Vembanad Lake. And if you are lucky, you also pen a poem:

The pretty fish waved and smiled;
The Siberian crane asked me to fly;
The *Jal Kumbhi* just offered a ride.

The rain has started pouring;
The earth has started perfuming;
The wave just kissed before shying.

The birds are singing;
The mangroves are clapping;
The canoe is playing with me, eyes pyes.

Is this an illusion or a dream?
Or has my luck smiled?
This journey so beautiful has lost all its miles.

(Visit the book page at

<http://ankurmutreja.com/kerala-hugged/>)

Alleppey: Learn

The Context

After hearing about the luxury houseboats and for my abhorrence of the same, I had almost made up my mind to skip Alleppey – Can you believe it! But thanks to the snake boat races, which were happening everywhere in and around Alleppey during the Onam celebration week, I headed for Alleppey. Alleppey, Kumarakom, and Kollam are hubs of backwater cruising, but the backwaters don't start and end with luxury cruises. There is a whole different world out there extending from Kochi to Kollam. I had my share of luxury in a *Shikara* cruise in Vaikom backwaters near Kochi itself, which I have discussed elsewhere. Now my only motivation for Alleppey was discovery of a new different life waiting to be explored in backwaters.

Alleppey is the central hub of waterways opening up to the widest stretch of Vembanad Lake near Nehru Trophy Boat Race finishing point. I snuggled myself up in a comfortable home stay next to the finishing point for almost a week and explored the backwaters like a local (except that I had no knowledge of Malayalam). I think this is the only way to spend more than 2 days in backwaters: whatever your appetite for luxury, you just can't keep ordering people days-after-days, weeks-after-weeks, sitting in a luxury bedroom inside a houseboat, knowing well enough your houseboat is destroying the beautiful environment outside with the ugly snort of diesel.

Life in Backwaters

The life in the backwaters intersperses with that on land, but indeed there are a few villages which have no land connection with the outside world. The backwaters are the canals and the lakes created by the

backflow of sea water into the rivers arriving from the Nilgiris for exit into the sea via

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houses too, which on little inquiry were found to be owned by NRI returns from the Gulf.



For a tourist, all this would be an attraction, but, for locals, it might just be boring. How long can you remain attached to a same lifestyle? Yes, surely, the lifestyle was idyllic! Inspirational for writing! But what after the book completes? Change is necessary! Anyways, I don't think the tourists take the ferry too very often. So, the illusion remains intact in the

houseboats.



The trip in the country boat was under the smart guidance of a local village man named James (name changed for privacy protection), shared with three young backpackers from Italy, Isreal and Holland. After a trip in the big size ferry, the trip in the small country boat had its own character. The boat was like a small activist, who would just not attach himself to the glitz and glamour of the big houseboats.

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The island of water hyacinths separated me from the lake and also secured me into the protective arms of a tree fitted tightly into the secure ground underneath. Who says water hyacinths don't serve any purpose! At least for me, they were my shield against my enthusiasm, which, but for them, would have taken me to the unknown world of Vembanad Lake, irrespective of the guard posted for security, who in any case was napping.

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This is Communism -- I wonder what would happen when it would be Neo-Liberalism, which it very soon would be under the competent advice of Gita Gopinath, the newly appointed advisor to the CM. These houseboats may look good from far, but from near they are nuisance, period.

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for a very long stretch, where many beach resorts had also come up. Interestingly, there were display boards warning people from bathing and adventuring on that side of the beach. I wonder whether the beach resorts or the display boards appeared first. Anyways, the beach resorts had put up beach furniture in front of their properties, which were then occupied by dogs given the off season, and I must assure that the Keralan dogs, like Keralan men, are polite towards the tourists. They vacated one of the benches for me, which I occupied till I enjoyed a good afternoon nap.



By the time I woke up, the clouds enveloped the sky and the sea water complemented the clouds merging all into a single whole. The rains started pouring and lot many people came over to that side of the beach as well – Keralans are not naive after all; they knew exactly the veracity of those warning messages. Most of them were young college guys in some kind of a picnic mode. The Keralites seem to be having a good diet, may be because of beef. The young guys don't have paunches, are generally tall, and are pretty well developed too. Also there were many older women on the beach, who were ogling these guys, and it seemed as if it was normal and well-accepted.

I wonder which bureaucrat in Kerala came up with the idea of staring 14 sec or more as a criminal offence. Unless two people stare at each other, how would one know over another who stared whom? If a guy stares a girl, so would a girl stare the guy to reach a conclusion that she has been stared unless Google develops a special third eye for girls, which would capture the stares but won't stare the abominable guys; indeed a difficult call even for Google. Won't it be better to not have this staring offence at all? Let the old women stare young guys, and let the men stare

irrespective of age, given the women never age -- anyways, the men won't stop, certainly not at a beach!

Payyipad Boat Race

There are lots of snake boat races in Kerala, especially during the Onam festival celebrations. The biggest of them all, Nehru Trophy, was already over, but there were many challengers for the second spot: Payyipad, Aranmula, Moolam, etc. I chose Payyipad for no specific reason. This race is patronized by the Congress' politicians, and it did turn pretty funny by the end of it. Let me give the spoilers right away.

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The races continued for almost two hours with continuous commentary in Malayalam by an energetic speaker. I made friends with two Malayalam speaking locals, who religiously updated me with the happenings. However, even they were confused. I ended up watching at least five final races till I found the finalists were actually fighting over lane selection as discussed above. The others were actually self-sponsored races of the losers, who were trying to win, if nothing else, the appreciation of the audience.

Eventually, when the final race did happen, it was electric. There was not a single soul seated on the seats. People were clapping, singing, and shouting continuously, and those high on adrenalin were jumping into the water with or without clothes.

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(Visit the book page at

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Varkala: Relax

Munnar to Varkala



Transfer from Munnar to Varkala was not easy. As I had missed my bus in Munnar, I was already late. In addition to that, I didn't board the direct bus to Ernakulam. The bus dropped me at Aluva, from where I was advised to board a train to Ernakulam, some 30 minutes away in the train journey. After a wait of an hour, I did board a train but in the general compartment. There are two railway junctions in Ernakulam: North and South. I didn't know that the trains halting at Ernakulam North don't halt at Ernakulam South and vice versa. Ernakulam North arrived at the promised moment, and I did alight, but just then a fellow traveler assured me the train would halt at Ernakulam South too. In fact, he was himself alighting there. He looked like a local; so, I didn't double confirm it. Only later I realized he was himself traveling to the city for the first time in a group comprising 30 people from Jharkhand. BTW, just for information,

this was his fourth train in his single journey from Jharkhand to Ernakulam. Anyways, the

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As per the doctor there, the *Shirodhara* massage should be preceded and followed by a head massage, and he decided to offer it free to me. So, the whole program lasted for an hour. Was it any good? Well...this program offers to cure you of your insomnia by reducing stress, releasing headache, migraine, etc. I don't have any chronic headache problem, but I do wake up several times at night. Of course, I am not naive enough to expect cure of my sleep problems (if any) in a single exercise. Before starting the exercise, the advice I got from the doctor was to not to expect much, to enjoy the moment, and to try not to think too much about it. I don't do meditation, so it is not possible for me not to think. I asked him if it would be alright to fall asleep. He said it would be the best. Unless I am with a partner, I fall asleep thinking something or the other: fantasies, court proceedings, social issues, nature, and chores in the decreasing order of preference. My obvious choice there was fantasies. Ever since I had come to Kerala, I had not found a single girl arousing amorous interest. Interestingly, during the exercise, I dreamt of an unknown Keralan face, of whose I was not interested in the face of course. The message of the exercise:

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Morning Walk: North Cliff to Edava/Kappil Beach



It seems North Cliff to Edava Beach is a completely unexplored area. There was an unstructured walkway right from the cliff to the beach, but, of course, it was not well planned. There were lots of private beach resorts on the way, who had obviously constructed promenades on the shore lines in front of their properties. These promenades linked to each other forming a continuous pathway. Wherever there were no resorts, there were *kuccha* pathways used by the villagers. The walk in the morning was an immense pleasure. There was so much of natural beauty in and around the pathway that a few km walk turned into a never ending dreamwalk taken leisurely in sync with the pace of the clouds on the horizon. The modest houses of the commoners gave competition to the big resorts of the rich, for the nature wouldn't discriminate between the rich and the poor. Fortunately, the political society of the place had still not allowed the resorts to acquire the lives of the villagers; therefore, the fishermen would carry out their activities unperturbed next to the resorts, and the guests would, for a change, watch and learn.

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the sea from a small lake and leading towards a motorable road, and the next I saw a "Real Yoga Center: Lake N' Sea" having a lake on the back and the sea on the front, but I think the dogs were having more fun over there. No, I don't think Varkala dogs pose any threat to humanity.



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Epilogue

Kerala is a land of pleasures. There is not just one thing which engages your faculties. There are the hills, the backwaters, the wildlife, the religion, the beaches, the art, the history, the habitations...and the list continues. I started my trip from Kochi, which indeed is the best gateway to the intriguing and magnificent Kerala for the first time visitors, but those who have experienced Kerala will have their favorites. Some may want to relax at beaches forever, others may want to experience art and history in the cities, yet others may want to row in the backwaters. Some may want to ride their bikes on the hills, others may want to explore wildlife, yet others may want to pilgrimage. I found my solace in the hills: indeed Munnar has emerged as my favorite; so, I have presented her the first in this book. She was the favorite, but the backwaters, the beaches, the art, and the history were not far behind. I wanted to explore wildlife but couldn't, and that has left a void. I have no interest in religion, but who can remain disengaged from the "God" in "God's own Country"; so, I did encounter him time-to-time in and around churches, temples, mosques, and wherever else, but I certainly didn't make any special efforts to engage with him. But for the knowledge of Malayalam, I would have explored the habitations. But given the kind of love the people exuded in Kerala, the attraction was overwhelming. For now, they remain unexplored, but who knows what may happen tomorrow.

I had to return. There was no option otherwise. Could have it been any different? Why can't I become a traveler forever? Why can't I grow a money tree, which would fund all my travel expenses? Or can I try a career in travel? Why do I have to be in Delhi to attend courts? Why can't there be mobile courts, who would be global travelers too? Why can't everybody be just a traveler? Why do we need permanent addresses?

I don't know the answers to the above questions, but I am adamant to make my world beautiful, which obviously can't happen if I remain

stuck in Delhi. Of course, I will travel soon, and when I do that, I will write some more. Will you read that too? You will! Right! For now, please rate/review this book: it gives lots of motivation. Thanks for your time! Hope to catch up soon!

(Visit the book page at

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Appendix A: Info Kochi

Country: India

State: Kerala

District: Ernakulam

Area: 742 Square km

Elevation: 0m

Population: 3,117,990 (2012)

Languages: Malayalam, English

Places of Interest: Marine Drive, Chinese Finishing Net, Mattanchery Palace, Sanata Cruz Basilica, Kerala History Museum, Broadway, Backwaters, Bolgatty Island, Vypin Island, Willingdon Island, etc.

Eating Places: Dal Roti, Kashi Art Café, Fusion Bay, Malabar Junction, Fort House, Dhe Puttu, Pepper House, Oceanos, Teapot Café, etc.

CONTENTS OMMITTED

Appendix E: Trip Timeline

3rd September, 2016: Boarded the train, Kerala Express, at Delhi.

5th September, 2016: Reached Ernakulam; traveled to Fort Kochi and put up therein.

12th September, 2016: Traveled from Fort Kochi to Alleppey via Ernakulam and put up in Alleppey

17th September, 2016: Traveled from Alleppey to Fort Kochi via Ernakulam and put up in Fort Kochi.

18th September, 2016: Traveled from Fort Koch to Munnar via Ernakulam and put up in Suryanelli near Munnar.

21st September, 2016: Traveled from Munnar to Thekkady and put up therein.

23rd September, 2016: Traveled from Thekkady to Munnar and then to Varkala via Ernakulam.

24th September 2016: Reached Varkala and put up therein

28th September, 2016: Traveled from Varkala to Trivandrum and boarded the train, Nizammudin Express, thereat.

30th September, 2016: Reached Delhi.

Other Titles by the Author



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